

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

Olmsted Archives and Other Holdings

January 2012

The museum collections of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site include a wide range of materials, from archeological objects, office furniture, equipment and machinery, to a vast quantity of archival documents related to the landscape architecture practice of Frederick Law Olmsted, his sons John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., and their associates and successors. These are commonly referred to as the Olmsted Archives, and collectively constitute the largest and best-known body of materials within the museum collections of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site. These collections are briefly described below. The Olmsted firm also created specific job numbers for some 6,000 landscape architecture projects throughout the United States and beyond. To find a specific job number for a particular project, please consult the Olmsted Research Guide Online ORGO (<http://ww2.rediscov.com/olmsted/>) or the Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm, 1857-1979 published by the National Association for Olmsted Parks.

Descriptions below are for the following collections:

- I. Records Related to Design Projects
- II. Administrative/Business Materials
- III. Ephemera/Reference Materials
- IV. Furniture and Objects Collections

I. Records Related to Design Projects

A. Plans & Drawings, c.1847-1979 (Bulk 1882-1970)

139,464 items [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

This is the primary collection illustrating the landscape design work of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. (1822-1903), his sons John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), and the successive Olmsted firms. The records contain a wide range of media and format, and include sketches, preliminary plans, studies, topographical surveys, profiles and sections, architectural and engineering drawings, grading plans, planting plans, and master plans, and published lithographs. Also included in the collection are water-colored perspective drawings, maps, and some correspondence that was originally attached to the plans. Many of the plans and drawings contain extensive annotations, including notes, calculations, and sight lines. The bulk of the collection was created by the Olmsted firm, but also includes plans from outside/consulting architectural and engineering firms, plans and maps from municipalities, and published materials from private and governmental entities, (USGS, for example).

B. Photo albums, 1867-1978

1,500 albums including 60,000 prints; 600 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

The photo album collection visually documents the landscape development process. It consists of captioned photographs mounted in albums, showing existing landscape conditions, grading and construction work, new plantings, and completion photographs. Albums may also contain photographs taken over several years or decades, as the Olmsted firm was consulted for redesigning or restoring landscapes they had previously worked on. Also includes loose photographs, postcards, brochures, and news clippings.

C. Planting Lists, 1884-1962

70,000 sheets; 105 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

This collection comprises itemized lists of trees, shrubs, ground cover, flowers, and other herbaceous material including botanical and common names and quantities specified for use in a landscape design, often related directly to a specific Olmsted Planting Plan. Files usually contain both draft copies and final typed copies for the client, order forms used for contacting nurseries, and other related notes.

D. Lithographs, 1877-1979

2,700 items [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

This collection contains published prints of preliminary plans, master plans, general plans, maps and diagrams. Lithographs of master or general plans were often intended to accompany published reports for many public parks and campuses. For private subdivisions, the lithographs were generally used to illustrate advertising booklets. Most, but not all, of the lithographs were generated by the Olmsted firm.

Lithographs exist for approximately 235 Olmsted projects (providing roughly 400 unique images, counting editions and annotations). They usually indicate the plan title, date, scale, firm name, and draftsman; they may also have an insert map of the surrounding area and a key to areas and distances. Duplicate lithographs exist for many jobs. Many bear Olmsted plan numbers since they are a reduced version of a plan drafted in the office. A small number of the lithographs are annotated.

E. Records & Reports, 1857-1954

2,300 volumes; 142 linear feet [\[Excel spreadsheet guide to collection\]](#)

These holding consist of published articles, reports, pamphlets, maps, and other materials produced by government departments, park systems, and other organizations in bound format. Most are proposals or progress reports for landscape design projects. Many of the reports contain articles and summaries written by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., John Charles Olmsted, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., or other members of the Olmsted firm. Also included are books and reference materials. The collection contains many duplicates, and several of these documents are published materials that can also be found in related municipal libraries and parks departments.

F. Post 1949 Correspondence, 1949-1980

75 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#) [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

In 1967 and 1971, the Olmsted firm made a substantial donation of its records to the Library of Congress (LC). The donated materials pre-dated December 31, 1949, excluding materials that pertained to clients with which the firm was still working. Therefore, although the Post-1949 Correspondence collection consists primarily of the firm's client and administrative correspondence files dating between 1949 and 1980, many of the files contain significantly older materials if the firm had an earlier relationship with the client. The LC now holds the bulk of the firm's pre-1950 correspondence in two major collections: the Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. Papers and the Records of the Olmsted Associates.

For the most part, this collection contains original letters from clients and carbon copies of letters sent by the firm. The correspondence frequently details design decisions, sub-contractual agreements, and planting instructions. Besides letters, there are other items of correspondence such as telegrams and post cards. Many files include reports of site visits, cost estimates, and bills. There is a great deal of

printed matter in the form of reports, brochures, pamphlets, business cards, clippings, certificates, awards, and maps. Design materials such as plans, blueprints, diazotype prints, and hand-drawn sketches also appear.

G. New York Office Correspondence, 1930-1935; 1949

3.5 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#) [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

These files of correspondence appear to have been compiled at the New York field office, but were transferred at an unknown time to the Brookline office. The records consist of the following: correspondence between the Brookline office and the New York field office; applications for employment; reports of site visits; advertisements and price lists from plant nurseries; correspondence with suppliers and agricultural agencies; planting lists; and subject files, covering such topics as entomology, seed, and fertilizer. While the bulk of the correspondence is related to the construction of Fort Tryon Park (Job #529), there are also references to Claremont Park in New York (Job #527) and to Grove City College in Pennsylvania (Job #9192). One subject file is devoted to a project for John D. Rockefeller Jr. in Pocantico Hills, New York (Job #243).

H. California Office Correspondence, 1928-1938

4,000 items; 2.5 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#) [\[PDF Finding Aid – CA/Western Office Corr.\]](#)

This collection consists of correspondence, legal documents, financial records, contracts, sketches, blueprints, photographs, and promotional material for landscape design projects primarily located in the western U.S. The files in this collection were created and stored during the 1920s and 1930s at the Olmsted firm's branch office in Palos Verdes, CA.

I. Western Office Correspondence, 1928-1958 (Bulk 1938-1945)

8,250 items; 5.1 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#) [\[PDF Finding Aid – CA/Western Office Corr.\]](#)

Contains correspondence related primarily to public projects in California such as the California State Park System, Yosemite National Park, and a survey of the Colorado River Basin for the U. S. Department of the Interior.

J. Project Specific Records

1. Columbian Exposition, 1890-1894

4 linear feet

This collection includes 15 bound volumes of newspaper clippings (bulk dates 1892-1894), as well as specifications, invitations, correspondence, printed reports and progress reports from D. H. Burham.

2. Boston Common, 1907-1926

.5 linear feet [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

This material is related to the Boston Common soil improvement project and primarily consists of estimate sheets, lists of construction bids from contractors, progress reports, soil collection reports, contracts, and specifications.

3. Palos Verdes Records, 1920-1950

5 linear feet

These records include accounting reports and ledger cards used in tracking accounts at the Olmsted firm's branch office in Palos Verdes, CA, which managed west coast landscape design projects. See also California Office Correspondence.

4. Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Records, 1931-1950

1 linear foot [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

Susanna Bixby Bryant founded Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in 1927 on her property in Orange County, California. She was managing director of the institution until her death in 1946. The collection primarily consists of reports issued by the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden to its board of trustees, councilors, and staff. Each of the reports begins with contributions from the managing director, botanist, and superintendent, and ends with a survey of the garden's condition.

5. Mississippi State University Records, 1953-1973

1 linear foot [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

Olmsted Associates began landscape design work for Mississippi State University in the early 1950s. The firm's last plan for the project was generated in 1978. The Olmsted Archives houses 913 plans and drawings of the campus and twenty-one file folders of job-related correspondence. In addition to brochures and reports, the collection includes serial publications of Mississippi State University such as Mississippi Business Review and the campus newspaper, The Reflector.

K. JCO Reports of Visits, 1913-1915

157 items; 0.25 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

John Charles Olmsted's (1852-1920) notes from site visits to a variety of locations, including Ohio, Kentucky, New York, and Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canada are housed in this collection. His candid commentaries are enlightening for their view of the Olmsted firm's design process, revealing ongoing negotiations and compromises.

L. Models, c.1920-c.1940

50 items

Plaster topographical models, miniature buildings and trees, which were used in planning landscape designs for parks, campuses, and estates, comprise this collection. The Olmsted firm had its own model shop on site from 1903 until 1940. The collection includes 7x3 foot plaster model of Olmsted Job #529 Fort Tryon Park, New York (NY), plaster relief of Olmsted Job #502 Central Park, New York (NY), and miniature plaster campus buildings of Olmsted Job #176 Phillips Academy, Andover (MA).

M. Contracts & Agreements, 1882-1941

Bulk 1888-1898; 1903-1930, .5 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

These files were located in an historic oak filing cabinet in the lower planting department of the office wing and stored in tabbed correspondence filing boxes labeled "OB Professional Agreements Cancelled also Rough Drafts". The collection consists primarily of signed copies of agreements for work and contracts (some are preliminary contracts while others are designated final contracts).

N. Specifications & Contracts, 1902-1965

Bulk 1950-1965, 2.5 linear feet [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

These files were located in one drawer of an historic oak filing cabinet in the upper drafting room of the office wing. The drawer was labeled "Specifs." The collection primarily consists of "ditto masters" specifications, which describe the particular terms of a construction contract for a landscape design project, describing the details of the proposed plans for construction work and planting. Also included in this collection are bidding instructions for contractors, plant lists, preliminary and general reports, and site studies. For the most part, the folders are arranged numerically by job number.

O. Aiglon Photos, 1915-1933

Bulk 1924-1929, 2 lf [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#) [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

The Aiglon Aerial Photograph Collection consists primarily of aerial photographs of private estates, largely in four sizes (3x5", 4x6", 8x10" and 11x14") with some slight variation throughout. The Aiglon photographs were purchased by the Olmsted Brothers Firm in the 1920s, according to financial records of the firm and handwritten notes in correspondence files held at the Library of Congress. The private estates illustrated in the collection are largely from Long Island's "Gold Coast", a few from Newport, Rhode Island, a number from the greater Boston area, one from Maine, and one from Connecticut. Not all of the subjects are Olmsted clients; when an Olmsted firm connection could be associated, a job number was attached in the collection's documentation.

Administrative / Business Materials

A. Personnel Records

These are records related to the daily work assignments, wages, and hiring of Olmsted firm employees. The collections include a Payroll ledger, Time Books, Standard Diaries and Year Books, Time Memoranda, Application Files, Travel Expense Cards, and Employee Records Cards.

1. Standard Diaries / Yearbooks, 1895-1911; 1913-1925; 1928; 1940-1970; 1972-1974

70 items [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

The year books served as daily attendance records for the Olmsted firm. They document projects, meetings, travel patterns, and professional and social activities for the firm and its members.

2. Travel Expense Cards, 1934-1941

383 items; 0.5 linear feet

The cards record expenses incurred on business trips undertaken by various members of the Olmsted Brothers. The records document an individual employee's travel schedule as well as the breadth of projects in which he was involved.

3. Olmsted Associates Travel Expense Cards, 1961-1966

365 items; 1.0 linear feet

These cards recorded expenses of Olmsted Associates employees' requests for travel reimbursement. The records document an individual employee's travel schedule, breadth of projects in which he was involved, and associated travel expenses.

4. Employee Records Cards, 1904-1956

37 folders; 2 linear feet

Salaries, raises, insurance, travel expenses, and total hours worked per month by Olmsted Brothers employees are listed on these records. The cards serve as the most comprehensive list known of employees between 1904 and 1956. They document length of employment, types of jobs performed at the firm, and when employees were paid by outside sources.

5. Time Memoranda, 1925-1972

18 ms. boxes; 9 linear feet

Monthly records of hours worked, wages, and the total amount earned for each employee are included in these records. The memoranda also list landscape design projects each employee worked on, the hours spent on each particular project, and time off for travel, illness, or holidays.

6. Employee Records and Tax Records, 1892-1959

7 file folders and 1 volume; 0.5 linear feet

Applications for employment in the Planting Department, men placed by the Olmsted firm, and records related to employee's personal life are listed in these records. The tax records consist of withholding forms and tax returns of the Olmsted firm and some individuals.

B. Billing Records

The Billing Records Series primarily consists of individual typed or handwritten copybook sheets and carbon copies of bills sent, bound volumes of typed or handwritten copybook sheets, ledgers and ledger cards, and invoices sent to the Olmsted firm by businesses and vendors. The series documents the billing practices of the Olmsted firm from the time of FLO, Sr. in the 1870s, through the Olmsted Brothers' years, until the creation of the Olmsted Associates in 1961. The Billing Records provide an overview of how the Olmsted firm monitored the charges accrued by their clients, the particular services they billed their clients for, how their clients were charged for work performed by independent contractors, and the costs associated with operating a landscape design firm.

1. Bills Sent, 1874-1904

Arranged chronologically by year, this "Bills Sent" file documents billing practices of the Olmsted firm in the early years of its existence. The file contains copies of bills issued by FLO, Sr. and his associate, containing information such as the issue date of the bill, the client being billed, a detailed description of the work performed, the amount owed, and generally the date the payment was received.

2. Bills Sent - Connolly Brothers, 1906-1934

Arranged in chronological or reverse chronological order, this "Bills Sent" file consists of copies of the Connolly Brothers' bills sent to clients for contract work performed on Job #3700 Franklin Murphy, Mendham, NJ and Job #3162 William A. Rogers, Kennebunkport, ME. The Connolly Brothers were construction and building contractors who worked on at least one hundred jobs for the Olmsted firm from the 1880s until the 1940s. Also included are ledger sheets for work completed by M.E. & Sons in 1933-1934. The file contains itemized lists of charges concerning work executed on various construction and planting projects, wage records, summaries of bills, and a few billing and freight receipts. In general, the bills document some of the work performed by contractors, along with the rates charged for such work.

3. Bills Sent, 1904-1932

4. Bills Sent, 1926-1957

Arranged alphabetically by client name, these "Bills Sent" files were generated by the Olmsted Brothers as a means of tracking bills sent to and payments received from their clients. The file consists of carbon copies of bills sent to each client. These records summarize what the client was being charged for, such as prints, traveling and incidental expenses, or services of a firm member (who may or may not be identified.) Professional fees and expenses are sometimes broken down. Some sheets are initialed by firm members.

Several sheets include notes about disbursements and make cross references to letters in the client correspondence file, especially in cases where bills are disputed or unpaid. Some notes refer to the

firm's "Write-off Journal" where outstanding bills were transferred. Purchase order forms sent by companies or organizations are attached to some of the sheets.

5. Bills Receivable Ledger Cards, 1930-1957

Arranged in numerical order by job number/file number, the Bills Receivable Ledger Cards collection consists of individual cards that recorded bills sent and payment received for each Job number. Each card contains information such as Job number, Job name, the name of the person/organization being billed (if different from Job name), date bills sent out and checks received, ledger number the billing and payment information had been entered into, the expenses and professional services for which the client was being charged, the amount owed, and the amount paid. There are few details concerning the work for which the client was being billed. There are however notes about certain amounts being transferred to various accounts, such as Uncollectable Accounts, Unliquidated Assets, and the Write-off Journal. There are also notes about reductions of charges.

6. Ledger Book, 1955-1961

One file folder is arranged by subject and the bound volume is arranged chronologically by month. The Ledger Book aided the Olmsted firm in managing both their internal and external accounts, monitoring bills sent to and payments received from various clients. The ledger lists the Job name and number, along with the amount owed by the client. The amounts owed are categorized under certain accounts. Also included in the ledger are travel expenses accrued by various members of the Olmsted firm.

7. Bills Paid, 1929-1939

Folders are arranged chronologically and the items within the folders are arranged numerically by check number. The Olmsted Brothers generated the "Bills Paid" file as a means of monitoring the invoices received and paid by the firm. The file consists of invoices from various businesses that provided services to the firm. The type of bills in the file include (but are not limited to) subscription renewals, utility bills, charges for office supplies, job-related supplies, membership dues, insurance premiums, attorney fees, taxes, and laundry charges.

C. Legal Records, 1883-1962

31 folders; 1 linear foot

These records include property deeds and quitclaim deeds for property at the intersection of Dudley and Warren Streets in Brookline, MA, site of the Olmsted home and office and the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (Fairsted). The collection also includes the firm's partnership agreements, insurance records, retirement settlements, and salary agreements for partners.

D. Bank Records

Canceled checks, bank statements, deposit slips, and an index card file of companies and jobs to which checks were written by the Olmsted firm. Also includes records from separate bank accounts that the firm held for some of their more extensive projects.

1. Check Registers and Checks, 1870-1972

27 volumes and 52,800 checks; 34.4 lf

Payment records including check stub books and canceled checks for expenditures of the Olmsted firm. Included are details as to wages, insurance, nursery orders, and supplies.

2. Bank Statements, 1916-1970

2 If

This collection contains monthly statements of bank accounts held by Olmsted Brothers and Olmsted Associates.

E. Correspondence, Telegram, and Telephone Log Books, 1954-1980

10 volumes; 1.3 linear feet

Logs of incoming and outgoing correspondence, telegrams, and telephone calls of the Olmsted firm are found in this collection. It provides information regarding the in process work of the firm and decisions made regarding landscape design projects.

F. Ledgers / Accounting Records

These are detailed accounting books and cards used to record income and expenditures of the Olmsted firm.

1. Ledgers, 1890-1964

50 volumes; 6.5 linear feet

Bound volumes record the income and expenditures of the Olmsted firm. Many ledgers contain itemized lists of expenses associated with various landscape design projects, travel expenses, and employee wages. The Olmsted firm used both ledgers and cards to track the firm's finances. See also Journal Cards and General Ledger Cards.

2. Journal Cards, 1907-1913

6 folders

Records of the Olmsted Brothers internal account, including accounts for the professional services of firm, expenses, profit and loss, amounts brought forward, closure of accounts, and inventory of outstanding expenses by date.

3. General Ledger Cards, 1903-1957

Bulk 1913-1947, 88 folders

Olmsted Brothers operational costs and accounting arranged by account code, such as personnel, travel, insurance, capital gains, etc. are recorded on these cards.

4. Cost Cards, 1904-1950

14,900 cards; 26 linear feet

Expenses associated with Olmsted landscape design projects including charges for wages, construction, plants, printing, photography, and travel.

G. Olmsted Office Job/Client Reference Materials

The Olmsted office created a variety of distinctive registers, card files, and indices recording the internal physical and organizational arrangement of the landscape design records.

1. Job Number Book, c.1890-1980

3 volumes

Bound registers list Olmsted job numbers assigned to landscape design projects and other internal accounts by the Olmsted office. Public parks in major metropolitan areas were generally assigned

blocks of job numbers. For example, New York City parks were assigned job numbers in the 500s, Boston (MA) parks were assigned numbers in the 900s. This also includes job (client) names and locations, with some annotations.

2. Vault Book, c.1890-c.1977

1 volume

This bound register lists Olmsted job numbers and job names assigned to vault boxes (cubbyholes) in which associated plans and drawings were stored in the historic Olmsted office Plans Vault.

3. Client Card File, 1860-1979

bulk 1902-1929, 28,000 items; 18 linear feet

Index card file created by the Olmsted firm list clients, contractors, employees, architects, applications for employment, parks officials, organizations, architectural publications, reports, and materials.

4. Geographic Index of Clients, 1946-1950

900 items; 1.0 linear feet

Index card file of Olmsted firm clients through 9000 job numbers arranged by state in which the client or project resides.

5. Estates Card File, 1901-1938

1,100 items; 1.2 linear feet

This is an index card file to magazine articles included in the Olmsted firm periodical collection for English country and suburban estate architecture and gardens. The most-referenced are from English Country Life. It also includes references to estates in America, France, Holland, Italy, and Spain. See also Library/Periodicals.

6. Subject Index, n.d.

150 items

Index card file of Olmsted jobs arranged by subject, from Arboretums and Botanical Gardens to Subdivisions.

7. Plans Index Card Files, c.1890-1979

120,000 items; 95 linear feet [\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#)

The Olmsted office created distinct index cards for each individual plan. Cards generally record plan number, title, scale, date, draftsman, cross-references to other plans, and whether the plan was destroyed or superseded. These cards include plan types such as preliminary, general, grading, topographical, study, planting, profile and section, or architectural and engineering drawings.

8. Plans Sent Card File, c.1890-c.1979

127,000 items; 94 linear feet

This collection contains index cards for each plan and drawing sent out of the Olmsted Brothers office to clients and associated firms.

9. Lithograph Card File, c.1950

450 items; 0.5 linear feet

These are the index cards for the Lithographs collection arranged by name or geographic location as recorded in title block.

10. Barn Loft Catalog, 1930-1950

500 items; 0.4 linear feet

These are index cards recording published materials in the firm's Records and Reports collection for city planning.

11. Pamphlet Index, c.1900

7,700 items; 4 linear feet

This is a bibliographic card catalogue of articles found in periodicals in the Olmsted firm Library, such as *Landscape Architecture*, *Garden Magazine*, and *Garden and Forest*. It also cross-references to Job Photograph Albums and NAB NAC study files.

II. Ephemera / Reference Materials

A. Trade / Supply Catalogs, ca. 1912-1976

Approx. 9,000 items [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

These series consists of advertising circulars, nursery catalogs, and architectural and industrial supply catalogs that were mailed to the Olmsted office between 1912 and 1976, although the bulk of the materials date from the 1950s and after.

1. Commercial Nursery Supply Catalogs

Organizationally, this collection is divided into two parts. The files that were stored in drawers labeled "Nurseries (Last Three Years)" are arranged alphabetically by company name. The other larger collection of catalogs is arranged alphabetically by geographic location; files for Canada, Europe, and Japan follow the files for American states.

2. Commercial Architectural/Industrial Supply Catalogs and Index

These trade catalogs were sent to the firm by tool manufacturers, furniture makers, designers of architectural elements, and suppliers of construction materials. The files are arranged alphabetically by subject. Some of the files include sample materials, such as packets of fertilizer and fiberglass chips. Most of the material was received between the years 1952-1975, but there are a few items of much earlier date, such as a catalog of sundials from 1914. Two sets of index cards accompany the architectural/industrial supply catalogs.

3. Materials Supply Catalogs and Promotional Materials

These files contain brochures and catalogs for materials such as concrete and enamel.

4. Commercial Supply Catalogs

This subsection is divided into two parts: nurseries, and other supplies. The "Nurseries" section contains catalogs and brochures for plant nurseries. The "Other Supplies" section contains catalogs, brochures, and other materials, mostly about non-plant landscaping supplies (such as outdoor furniture, fountains, and lighting fixtures), but also pertaining to miscellaneous topics such as the Olmsted Christmas card.

B. Planting Department reference materials, 1846-1975

21,500 items, 10 lf [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

This series is comprised of five smaller series that provide information on subjects such as plant nomenclature, appearance, growing habits, means of propagation, and regional suitability. The collection includes photographs, magazine articles, catalog clippings, an index to commercial suppliers, and a card catalogue to the horticulture literature stored in the firm's library and pamphlet files. Perhaps most interesting, are the first-hand observations that were recorded by two of Olmsted Brothers' landscape architects: Robert B. Coe systematically documented the blooming dates of a wide variety of flowering plants, and Hans J. Koehler created an index to the hardiness of plants in the Northeast.

C. NAB/NAC, 1817 – 1972 (Bulk 1910-1929)

[\[cataloged in ORGO\]](#) [\[PDF Finding Aid\]](#)

The NAB/NAC Reference Collection consists primarily of newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, maps, catalogs, plans, brochures, and ephemera and index cards dating from 1817-1972. These files served as a reference collection (oe "vertical file") for employees of the Olmsted Brothers Firm (1898-1961) and the Olmsted Associates Firm (1961-1979). The files in this study collection illustrate trends in architecture, landscape architecture, horticulture and related disciplines. The two card files served as indexes to the larger study collection. Materials that were identified with Olmsted jobs were entered into the ORGO database with that job number.

1. NAB/NAC Study Collection

22 linear feet; 53 document boxes, 5 map folders

The NAB/NAC Study Collection consists mainly of newspaper and magazine clippings, photos, maps, catalog, plans, brochures and ephemera organized according to NAB/NAC Classification number. Dating mostly from the 1910's through the 1920's, the collection represents a broad range of visual design references and reflects trends in landscape design, architecture, horticulture, and social issues. The collection was apparently used as a reference tool by members of the Olmsted Brothers and Olmsted Associates firms seeking practical information about or examples of design-related topics.

2. NAB/NAC Card File

6 linear feet; 6 index card boxes

This sub-series consists mainly of hand-written index cards arranged alphabetically by author and subject. It serves as an author/subject index to the NAB/NAB Study Collection. Recorded on an individual card are the subject or author reference, the materials in the collection which relate to the particular, and the NAB/NAC classification number on the folder where the material will be found.

3. NAB/NAC Card File, Geographic

1 linear foot; 1 index card box

This sub-series consists mainly of hand-written index cards arranged alphabetically by city/state location. It serves as a geographic index to the NAB/NAB Study Collection. Recorded on each card is the location, the materials in the collection that relate to that particular location, and the NAB/NAC folder where the material was originally filed.

D. European Photo Collection c.1857-1928

2,000 items; 61 linear feet [PDF Finding Aid – coming soon!]

This collection contains photographs, prints, postcards, and newspaper clippings of landscapes, structures, and other features. It encompasses mostly European sites but also includes Africa, South America, and Japan. The photos were used as a study and reference collection by the Olmsted firm, and many of the photographs are annotated.

E. Library, 1839-1979

2,300 volumes; 150 linear feet

The Olmsted firm library contains published reference works on gardens, plants, architecture, park and campus planning, urban studies, and design. It also includes biographical works about Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.

F. Periodicals, 1899-1979

3,300 items; 70 linear feet [PDF Finding Aid – coming soon!]

Representing over 160 landscape or design-related publications, this collection contains early editions of *Gardens Old and New*, *Country Life*, *Landscape Architecture*, and *Park and Cemetery*, up through late-20th century issues. Many articles were written by members of the Olmsted firm.

G. Stone and Construction Material Samples c.1940

300 items

This collection contains stone and construction material samples from suppliers specified for use for various Olmsted firm landscape design projects.

H. Historic Herbarium, 1846-1921

1,800 items; 6.5 linear feet

The herbarium is a collection of dried plants classified (taxonomically identified) and mounted as herbarium specimens. It encompasses a wide geographic range and includes John Charles Olmsted's collection from the Mariposa Valley (CA) in 1864-1865. Additional collections are from the New Haven, Connecticut area, Central Park (NY), Biltmore (NC), and Brookline, Massachusetts. The collections are significant as one of the first attempts to identify the herbaceous resources in the Yosemite Valley, as a survey of the nineteenth-century plantings in Central Park, New York (NY), and as evidence of the Olmsted firm's development and use of new plant hybrids in landscape designs.

III. Furniture and Objects Collections

3,000 objects

Historic furnishings help to understand the landscape design process throughout the Olmsted firm's tenure at Fairsted. They include:

- Drafting Room tables, stools, paper bins, and lamps;
- Printing Room furnishings illustrating early print processes such as the ammonia closet, Wagenhorst Electric Blue Printer (1904), sunprint racks, and light tables;
- Developing Room furnishings such as washing racks and trays;
- Drying Room furnishings such as print frames;
- Planting, Shipping, and Clerical Department furnishings also exist, some of which are on exhibit.

- Innovative storage configurations including Photograph Storage Room and a three-level Plans Vault first erected in 1902;
- Small drafting tools and implements, as well as office equipment and supplies.